US Army Corps of Engineers
Rock Island District

United States Department of Defense

US Army Corps of Engineers - Rock Island District

UMR-IWW Navigation Study
1994 Public Meetings

Interim Product Report, November 1995
"Response to Issues Raised at the Public and NEPA Scoping Meetings of November 1994"

List of Issue Statements

The Interim Report "Response to Issues Raised at the Public and NEPA Scoping Meetings of November 1994" addresses seventy-six (76) that came out of the 1994 Public Meetings. The issue statements are listed here, organized into the six (6) major project elements they refer to. Click on the project element heading to jump to the detailed discussions of each issue.

Study Management/Project Management

1. Congress has authorized the Corps of Engineers to conduct various kinds of studies (e.g., navigation and flood control). What is the specific authority for this study and how does it impact the scope?

2. The Corps of Engineers conducts various types of studies. The differences in conducting a "reconnaissance study" and "feasibility study" should be clearly explained.

3. This study is part of larger questions involving the role of government in transportation and agriculture. How can issues of government priorities and policies be addressed?

4. The Navigation Study was initiated to assess the need for navigation improvements to address delays to commercial navigation traffic. What trends or practices are driving the need for these changes?

5. In looking at implementing measures at locks, the Corps should consider long-term impacts related to the decision. In particular, attention should be given to exploring the possibility that delays will simply shift to other limiting structures: upstream locks, bridges, and other structures.

6. The cost of the study, the breakdown of where that money is being spent, and who is paying for it need to be clearly defined.

7. Based on the Corps of Engineers role as a Federal water projects construction agency, there appears to be a potential bias towards construction and conflict of interest in conducting the study. How is the Corps addressing these issues?

8. Substantial amounts of data have been collected and analyzed as part of previous studies; how this information is being incorporated needs to be explained.

9. The study's relationship to flood control efforts, the Flood of 1993, and the "Galloway Report" should be explained.

Environmental

10. The Corps of Engineers needs to explain how they intend to determine and evaluate the environmental impacts which will be caused by increasing lock capacity and navigation traffic on the UMR-IWW system. This study also should explain how the Corps of Engineers intends to protect fish and wildlife habitat.

11. Implementing measures leading to increased commercial navigation could lead to impacts on local communities by affecting tourism, recreation, and hunting. How is the study addressing these issues?

12. The Corps of Engineers has long overlooked the environment in decision making. The recommendations to Congress resulting from the Navigation Study must consider the environment equally with navigation and water control issues.

13. The UMR-IWW system has been the focus of study for many years. Why is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) being prepared and will it address areas not covered by previous studies?

14. The Corps of Engineers, as part of the Navigation Study, needs to include a long-range plan for the protection and restoration of the Upper Mississippi River System's natural resources. This planning should be completed at full Federal expense.

15. The length of time presently allotted to complete the Navigation Study is insufficient to do a complete and credible environmental assessment. The Corps of Engineers needs to increase the study timetable so additional time is available to assess impacts.

16. An objective and independent group, like the National Academy of Sciences, should evaluate the UMR-IWW System Navigation environmental study plans.

17. Methods and procedures for protecting the UMR-IWW system from increased navigational traffic need to be addressed in the EIS.

18. Mitigation planning for the second lock at Melvin Price Lock and Dam needs to be completed and included in the Navigation Study.

19. The navigation industry's degree of fiscal involvement in the mitigation of environmental losses resulting from future UMR-IWW system improvements needs to be clearly outlined.

20. The Navigation Study needs to address increasing sedimentation in backwater areas, protecting backwater habitats, reducing sediment resuspension, and reducing dredged material placement.

21. The Navigation Study should address dredging and dredged material placement activities in the UMR-IWW system, specifically the creation of dredged material beaches.

22. The Navigation Study needs to address the issue of contaminated sediments, resuspension of these sediments, and the effects on wildlife species.

23. The UMR-IWW system is presently experiencing bank erosion problemsproblems which could increase with higher levels of tow traffic. The Navigation Study EIS should address bank erosion concerns as they relate to tow traffic and forecast increases in traffic levels.

24. The additional studies proposed by the Navigation Environmental Coordination Committee need to be completed and included in the EIS.

25. The Navigation Study should examine the impacts of increased navigation traffic on macroinvertebrates.

26. The Mississippi Flyway plays a very important role in the life history of many waterfowl and neo-tropical migratory birds. The Navigation Study needs to examine the impacts that increased commercial traffic will have on these species.

27. The Corps of Engineers needs to address the cumulative impacts of both the present and future navigation system in the UMR-IWW system study. This assessment should include an evaluation of the future without-project condition, an analysis of the long-term cumulative impacts of ongoing operation and maintenance (O&M) of the existing 9-foot channel, and a retrospective examination of the river from pre-impoundment to present day.

28. Water control and water regulation issues should be addressed in the Navigation Study.

29. Projected traffic increases for the UMR-IWW will undoubtedly be accompanied by the development of barge fleeting terminals and other facilities on the river system. The EIS should address the impacts these navigation-related areas and activities are likely to produce.

30. The Navigation Study needs to include an economic and environmental evaluation of transportation alternatives other than barge traffic.

31. Increased navigation will increase the chances of accidents and hazardous substance spills on the UMR-IWW. The EIS should address safeguarding procedures to avoid and minimize the impacts of accidents and spills.

32. How will the Navigation Study consider the effects of increased navigation on fisheries resources of the UMR-IWW?

33. The Navigation Study needs to address the impacts of increased navigation traffic on mussels and needs to examine the effect on the spread of zebra mussels.

34. The impacts of future improvements on endangered species need to be examined and included in the Navigation Study EIS.

35. The study should examine the impact of increased navigation on aquatic vegetation.

36. The impacts of recreational boating on the UMR-IWW system should be examined. This examination should include the increased potential for conflicts and safety concerns between recreational boat and navigational traffic using the system.

37. The Corps of Engineers needs to completely examine all alternatives to lock capacity expansion. This examination should include removing the present lock and dam system as an alternative.

38. The Navigation Study needs to address the impacts of increased navigation on wetlands.

39. The use of risk assessment techniques in the navigation studies needs to be clearly explained.

40. Many areas of concern about the river cannot be fully addressed as part of the Navigation Study. How are environmental, multiple use, and long-term management issues being addressed outside of the Navigation Study?

Historic Properties

41. The way this study is addressing historic properties needs to be clearly defined.

Public Involvement

42. There are strengths and weaknesses related to holding public meetings. How was this format decided on and what other options for public input are being pursued?

43. Many interests have a stake in the river. What actions is the Corps of Engineers taking to coordinate the study efforts with other agencies, interest groups, and the general public?

44. A wide range of comments and concerns has been expressed throughout the study. How is this public input being taken into consideration, and is the study, prior to completion, critically evaluated to determine if there is a viable option that provides an economically, engineeringly, and environmentally sound alternative which is publicly acceptable?

45. How is the Navigation Study being coordinated with other Federal actions that are likely to affect the river and environmental corridors?

Economics

46. In order to accurately understand the transportation needs of the river system now and in the future, the Corps of Engineers needs to carefully assess the role other modes of transportation can and should play in moving commodities.

47. If improvements are made to the navigation system, it is going to have some impact on other modes. What impacts are expected and how are they being accounted for in the study?

48. Barges receive some subsidies from the Federal Government in constructing and maintaining infrastructure. The differences in the costs of using the various systems and subsidies received need to be defined.

49. What is the length of the navigation season, and does this affect the recommended mode?

50. Shipping rates play a large role in the economic analysis. The source for these rates and their historic fluctuation need to be defined.

51. What is this study's relationship to ISTEA?

52. One of the options being considered is the construction of new 600- or 1,200-foot locks. What would be the cost of constructing these locks for the system and

how does it compare with the cost of delay that is being experienced by barges?

53. The Navigation Study economic projections need to include changes and shifts in production and use of agricultural products and other commodities shipped on the inland waterways.

54. If small- or large-scale improvements are implemented, could this help reduce traffic on the system and the number of barges needed?

55. The results and recommendations coming out of the Navigation Study rely in large part on the traffic projections and economic benefits that will be determined as part of the economics analysis. What steps are the Corps of Engineers taking to see that these figures are accurate and unbiased?

56. The Corps of Engineers undertakes a National Economic Development benefit analysis as part of its studies. What are the benefits included in this analysis, and is the Corps also considering conducting a Regional Economic Development analysis?

57. The Corps of Engineers should look into a users fee system as a way to raise revenue and manage demand.

58. The Corps of Engineers needs to provide information on who is currently paying for the lock and dam system. Based on the current system of cost sharing for new construction, are there sufficient funds to implement small- or large-scale measures if they are recommended?

59. Several costs related to the lock and dam system are paid by or cost shared with the Federal Government. What is the total of the Federal contributions and could the barge industry pay these costs and still make a profit?

60. The Corps has estimated the benefits of commercial navigation at $1 billion annually. How does this compare with the yearly economic activity related to recreation on the Upper Mississippi River of $1.2 billion and could other modes provide the same benefits as navigation?

61. In assessing any navigation system expansion, an understanding of environmental impacts, operations and maintenance costs, and alternatives is needed. How will these concerns be taken into account in the economics evaluation?

62. An understanding of the basics of commercial navigation is needed to better evaluate the current system.

63. The study should identify how the agricultural sector is being included in the analysis.

64. The shipment of commodities and the related businesses supported by these movements add to the regional, national, and international economy. How is the study addressing and including these benefits?

65. The construction of locks and dams and the ongoing operations and maintenance serve as a form of subsidy to the navigation industry, since they are not paying the full costs to provide this infrastructure. How are past and current decisions on who pays for the system being accounted for in this study?

66. In carrying out the economic analysis, will other Federal subsidies and policies be taken into account?

Engineering

67. What is the definition of small-scale measures, and what types of things are being examined?

68. The use of the river as a recreational resource is increasing the regularity at which both barges and recreational craft are waiting to use locks. Are measures being evaluated that would provide alternatives for recreational craft to using the main lock chambers?

69. Many of the locks and dams on the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway were constructed in the 1930-40s. Is the study addressing the need for improvements or replacement of any of these locks and dams?

70. Are options involving widening, deepening, or straightening the channel being considered as part of this study?.

71. The large-scale measures under consideration are focused on the construction of new locks or the expansion of existing ones. Are auxiliary lock chambers being examined as potential sites for constructing either a new 600- or 1,200-foot lock?

72. The Navigation Study should examine innovative lock construction and design techniques which reduce costs and decrease environmental impacts.

73. In considering large-scale measures, what sill depth is being evaluated for new locks?

74. What is the role of levees in maintaining the navigation system and what potential impacts and costs are expected if improvements are made?

75. Significant study resources are going into the development of various models to assist in evaluating alternative measures. Is the Corps of Engineers satisfied with the results being obtained?

76. As part of the study plan, the Corps of Engineers has indicated that site-specific engineering will begin before the official end of the feasibility study phase. The reasons for this should be clearly explained.

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